

The following are emails from students and staff who were present at Laurel Elementary when it was housed in modular units on Locust St. between 1975 – 1992. These came in during the 2006 celebration.

I grew up in Fort Collins, my early years on Green Street near the hospital. Although my sisters attended Harris/Laurel, I missed the Harris (K-3) experience due to my family leaving the country. But, we returned in time for me to attend Laurel for 4th, 5th and 6th grade from 1975 to 1978. We were in the “temporary” building, although I didn’t know it was temporary then. It had a wood façade with brightly colored circles painted on it. Inside the classrooms were in “pods” with portable walls that allowed for rooms to be divided or not. I either walked or biked to school each day using the alley to Elizabeth, sometimes in the middle of the day to go home for lunch! Mr. Johnson was the principal; Mrs. Lebsack the “lunch lady”. We had fun field days. We had the presidential fitness tests. We had choir, but no violin program; hot lunch, but no salad bar.

When I was in fourth grade, I was swinging on the jungle gym with mittened hands and slipped off, landing on my face with my elbow painfully stabbing me in the stomach. I have a scar on my chin to prove it. I was taken to the nurse’s office where one of the workers, Esther Parks, told me that I looked “white as a ghost.” My mother had to come get me. When I returned the next day, I remember that I was wearing a skirt (a mystery since I tended to be a tom-boy), cowboy boots, and a big huge bandage on my chin. My teacher, Mr. Westbrook, laughed at me.

I believe it was in fourth grade that our music teacher, Mrs. Courtney, had us put on a Christmas program, where I acted the part of the donkey. I even had a solo of which I was very proud.

In fifth grade I was in a mixed fifth and sixth grade class with Mrs. Schnorr and Mrs. Streeter. This was the year that the school put on “Tom Sawyer”. In order to prepare, Mrs. Courtney, the music teacher, gathered us all in the gym to watch the movie. I remember sitting on the floor of the gym, supposedly watching the movie, but actually watching my best guy-friend snuggle with a girl. Even though I had not one ounce of romantic towards him, I was still jealous, and it ruined my enjoyment of

the movie. But nothing could remove the enjoyment of the play. I can still remember the song lyrics! I can also remember the lyrics to the choir songs we sang: “Lolly pop, lolly pop, oh, lolly, lolly, lolly...” or “I can’t smile without you” (that’s Barry Manilow!)

I had my share of unpleasant social experiences at Laurel. One year a girl half my size was able to rally the others into not letting me play soccer at recess. After awhile, my mother came to speak to the principal to put a stop to that. Another time, a girl in my class threatened to slap me at recess. I said, “Fine, go ahead,” and to my surprise, she did! After that, she went to the teacher and told on herself. Go figure. Another time, I put my younger brother on the back of my bike, against my parents’ instructions, and he got wound up in the spokes and fell off. When we went into the school, I begged them not to call my parents - he didn’t look THAT hurt - but they did, and he was taken home and I don’t remember what happened to me, except I had a ton of guilt.

In sixth grade, I had a very young (and cute!) teacher, Mr. Nyman, on whom half the girls in the class had a crush, including me, of course. Mr. Nyman had us keep track of the football scores that year, probably for some mathematical reason, and I remember that Tampa Bay lost every single game. In music we listened to the “Star Wars” soundtrack to note how each character had a musical theme. In counseling, Mr. Sadowski (Mr. Sid), guided us in exploring our opinions and feelings with the *Ungame* (I liked him a lot too!). In our version of human development, I asked the teacher what “morning sickness” was, and she laughed (apparently, I was a very funny child). The highlight of sixth grade was Eco Week. I was one of two girls who made it on the Mummy Range hike, and I loved walking around the lakes in the evening.

I am excited to be a part of the Laurel Tradition, and feel very fortunate to have Laurel be our neighborhood school so that my own three sons can enjoy the experience of being a Laurel Lynx as well!

Stephanie Madsen-Pixler

It is so exciting to know that Laurel is so historic! It makes me feel historic too.

Katy Marshall (aka Katy Kuhnen)

Both my brother Dan and I attended Laurel in the early 80's. I had Mr. Castro as a teacher, and I am pretty sure Dan did as well. There was Mrs. Minck and Mr. Ogan as well and Mr. Sadowski was the school counselor. That's all I remember off the top of my head.

Anyhow, we still live here in Fort Collins and are both Fort Collins Police Officers. We are both married, and Dan has 3 wonderful kids and I have 2.

Sincerely,
Rob Knab

I remember the choir singing at the Broadmoor, spending recess in the Nature Center, the closeness and unity of the school as a whole, assemblies, Student of the Month, school plays, and the race car driver.

Mary Ellen Yates,
Student 1985 – 1986

It has been six years since I sat in Mrs. Reuter's 6th grade class. I think the most memorable part of my three years at Laurel was going to the Broadmoor as a member of Mrs. Courtney's choir, "Expressions of Laurel." She continues to be the best at what she does, teach music.

ECO week! What a blast! I remember Kerian Nelson kicking the dresser in the middle of the night.

With all of the good things that happened it is difficult to think of the bad. The loss of a fine principal and great friend was traumatic. Mrs. Vigil was a wonderful inspiration to everyone.

As I graduate with the class of 1992, it is sad to see the old building go, but I know the new one will help educate the coming generations.

Best of luck to all alumni - - PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE!

Jessica Cromley, student 1983-1986

I was the nurse at the “old” Laurel when this Laurel opened, so I was the first nurse at the “new” Laurel. It was wonderful to have a bright, new building with everything on one floor. At the old Laurel the Principal’s office and the Health room were on the second floor. That made for good cardiovascular exercise.

Virginia Febinger, nurse 1964 – 1974

I was thrilled when Keith Johnston hired me for my first teaching job. Isabel Peña was an aide at Harris and kindly consented to visit my class several times a week to teach Spanish. Bud Hill was the P.E. teacher and last year, when I was substituting at Laurel, one of the students came back from P.E. class and told me Mr. Hill had found some frisbees in his closet with a Marvin label.

One of the things that changed at Laurel since 1978 was the addition of semi-walls between classrooms. I also remember the emphasis we put on handwriting skills that year, when years later I received a note from a parent for teaching correct penmanship.

Lindy Marvin, Teacher 1977 – 1978

I remember a group of people who worked and played together like a family. As a special education teacher I had to work closely with all the staff to develop programs suitable to an individual child’s needs. A sense of what was best for the child always carried us through. Teachers spent lots of time not only on the necessities of the job but on extras for the students: supervising sports activities before, during their lunch time and after school, choir and special music programs, enrichment classes and special events; the Holiday Bowl complete with Laurel’s Logo, players, coaches, cheerleaders, a band; Mr. Johnston’s bus and Christmas caroling in our school neighborhood and the Cinco de Mayo celebration complete with a burrito the length of the three lunchroom tables.

Ann Walden, Special Education Resource Teacher 1979-1985

How are Mrs. Courtney, Mrs. Streeter (? Tall with gray curly hair?), & Mrs. Lebsack? Those are the teachers I remember most, besides Mr. Castro.

Best, Carolyn Liebler

